

**Hearing Aid Care
5208 Hampton Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63109
1-800-724-7344**

OCTOBER 17, 2000

DEAR MADAM SECRETARY:

THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION MAY SHORTLY PROPOSE CHANGES TO THE WAY HEARING AIDS ARE SOLD THAT COULD PUT ME OUT OF BUSINESS AND IMPEDE ACCESS TO HEARING CARE SERVICES FOR MILLIONS OF OUR NATION'S SENIORS.

I AM A BOARD CERTIFIED, STATE LICENSED HEARING INSTRUMENT SPECIALIST. FOR OVER 20 YEARS I HAVE PROVIDED HEARING HEALTH TO THOUSANDS OF OUR STATE HEARING-IMPAIRED PEOPLE.

I BRING THESE SERVICES INTO RURAL AREAS, AS WELL AS IN-HOME WHEN NEEDED. A SERVICE MANY LESS MOBILE SENIORS APPRECIATE. TO DATE, I HAVE NEVER RUN ACROSS AN AUDIOLOGIST WHO PROVIDES IN-HOME SERVICES.

THE DEDICATION I SHOW THESE PEOPLE DOES NOT GO UNNOTICED. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT MY PATIENTS. LET THEM TELL YOU HOW MUCH THEY APPRECIATE MY WORK.

PRESENTLY, ALL THREE MEMBERS OF THE HEARING HEALTH CARE DELIVERY TEAM (HEARING AID SPECIALISTS, AUDIOLOGISTS AND PHYSICIANS) ARE RECOGNIZED AS QUALIFIED ENTRY POINTS INTO THE HEARING HEALTH CARE DELIVERY SYSTEM. THE RULE FDA IS ADVOCATING WOULD ALLOW AUDIOLOGISTS-- WITHOUT ANY JUSTIFICATION--TO INSTALL THEMSELVES AS THE SOLE ENTRY POINT INTO HEARING HEALTH CARE BY ALLOWING STATES TO REQUIRE TESTS THAT ONLY AUDIOLOGISTS CONDUCT PRIOR TO PURCHASE OF A HEARING AID.

ALLOWING AUDIOLOGISTS AN EXCLUSIVE ROLE IN THE HEARING AID DELIVERY SYSTEM, WITHOUT UNQUALIFIED MEDICAL DATA EVIDENCING THAT SUCH ROLE IS NECESSARY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH REASONS, WOULD SEVERELY UNDERMINE PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY AND WOULD INCREASE COSTS TO THE HEARING IMPAIRED.

I LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR RESPONSE AND WOULD APPRECIATE A COPY OF ANY LETTER YOU SEND ON MY BEHALF.

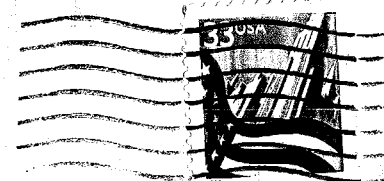
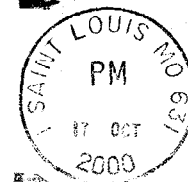
SINCERELY YOURS,

Thomas Sparrow
THOMAS SPARROW

TS/ac 93N 0372

C 4810

Hearing Aid Care and Services
5208 Hampton
St. Louis, Missouri 63109
(314) 481-3700



HONORABLE DONNA E. SHALALA
SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
200 INDEPENDENCE AVENUE, S.W.
ROOM 615F
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

